

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, April 2. 1711.

In my last, making some due Reflections (at least I think them so) on the present Prospect of a new-fashion'd War, in the North and East Parts of Europe; I hinted to you the lame wretched Notions our poor Ignorant People have, of the Foreign Affairs of Europe; and I cannot but note here—That this Ignorance is not so much the Error of the People, as their Disaster, and owing to the miserable Accounts given of Things in our Publick Prints, from whence they fetch their Information; and we need not tell you the Authors of the Papers, they are so generally Guilty of this Folly.

For Example, In the Publick Prints of April 7. We have the following Towns nam'd, through which, or to which, the Muscovites or the Poles are Marching, in order to the approaching Campaign, and this is done without so much as naming whereabouts any of those Towns are in the World, or in the Way from whence or to what Part; nor indeed any Autecedent Train of the Story to which they belong—The Places are thus—Bilazerkiew, Starifio, Slutz, Lida, Biliet, Stonini, Minsk, Steko, Pensee, Woronitz, and the like; no mention is made, whether any of these Towns are in Muscovy, Poland, Tertiary, the Dominions of

of the Turk ; or whether in this World, or the World in the Moon ; but as familiarly, as if they were all in Middlesex ; they are set down by themselves — What Information, any Man that has not the Maps of those Parts in his Head, or in his Hand, can get from them, I leave to any Man to judge — Again, in another Paper, we have the following Cate.

The Son of the *Cham of Tartary* is March'd to a Town call'd *Bracklaw*, on the River *Bog*, on the Frontiers of *Podolia*, and in the middle Way between the *Tartars* own Country of *Budzick*, and the River *Borishewes*

— Without saying where abouts this Town is, and which is worse, perplexing the Name of the Town ; one Paper tells us they are at *Bratglaw*, another calls it *Brazlaw*, a third calls it *Bleslaw*, a fourth *Breckfan* ; What shall a poor *Birchin-Lane-Reader* make of this ? — Another wise Author tells his Reader, that the *Crim of Tartary* is Marching with a great Army, &c. It is plain, had this Author common Sense, he would have said the *Tartars* of the *Crim*, or the *Crim Tartars*, or the *Cham* or *Han* of *Tartary* ; but *meer Ignorance* is the Cate, no wonder the Readers are so too.

But here comes an Author that knows better than these, and he tells us in his Paper of April 10. from *Plymouth* — That Yesterday her Majesty's Ships the *Oxford* and *Swallow* Sail'd for St. HELLEN'S — &c. I appeal to any Man that uses the Sea, or knows any Thing of the World, Whether we ought not to judge from that News, that the *Oxford* and *Swallow* were Sail'd from *Plymouth* to the Road of St. Helena, on the East of the Isle of Wight, going into Spithead — Whereas the Truth is — The *Oxford* and the *Swallow*, with the *Tilbury*, of whom we had the same Story told us a Week ago, are Sail'd for the Island of St. Helena, to meet and bring Home such Ships as shall come in there, in their Way from the East-Indies.

These Things I note, to make good by Examples what I formerly hinted of, the Usefulness and Necessity of those that take upon them to write Publick News, giving such due Explanations and Remarks as

Things, as they go, that their Ignorant Readers may not be impos'd upon, but may learn something of what is doing in the World, where, why, and by whom.

Every Body suffers by the Ignorance of these People ; the best Actions in the World relish not, where they are not received with the Sense due to the Reason and Design of them — How often have I heard the Protestants in *Hungaria* condemned, for having Recourse to the *Turks* for Protection, and the King of *Sweden* justify'd in it, from their Example : Whereas the Circumstances vastly differ — The one being forced by the Oppression of their Princes, to have recourse to the Law of Nature, Self-defence, and to call in Aid for mere Preservation of Life and Liberty, and the other forming Leagues and Confederacies with the Infidels, for Invasion, Conquest, and Dispossessing other Princes who have frequently offer'd Treaties of Peace, Satisfaction of Injuries, and Terms of Advantage to the *Swedes*.

The *Swedes* are a Powerful Nation, and were their King at Home to make a Defensive War, I believe, I may say, not the *Dane*, the *Pole*, or the *Muscovite*, put all together, could break in upon him ; wherefore he is not push'd by the same Necessity, which *else makes all War just*, to have recourse to the desperate and abhor'd Remedy, of bringing Armies of *Turks*, and *Hoards of Tartars*, upon the Christian Nations of *Europe*, over-running the Kingdoms of his Neighbours, with the innumerable Crouds of *Barbarians*, to the Desolation of the Nations round him, and the Emission of a Sea of Blood.

We have been told, that the *Czar* and the King of *Poland* have offer'd their Faith and Honour, for his safe Retreat through their Dominions into his own ; we have been told also, that the Confederates, now Engag'd in War, have offer'd their Mediation, between him and the several Princes he is at War with, and that these Princes offer to accept of that Mediation — Where then is the Necessity of this War ? Where is the justifiable Ground of the Attempt ? Where

Where is Reason for all the Blood and Misery that will follow this War?

What Dreadful Accoues have Kings to give, for the Havock they make in the World? And how little Reason have they to give for it? How little to plead in their Excuse! — Here one breaks into Holland, and Ravages three of the Dutch Provinces, which before he Evacuated again, had cost on both Sides above 100000 Men's Lives — And this, because he had Reason to be ILL SATISFIED with the Dutch; at another Time the Reason was, the King of France's Glory — There another brings 300000 Mahometans into Christendome, to tear the People to pieces, and lay desolate the Country — What is it for? To restore a King to a People, of whom the greatest Number say, we will not have this Man to Reign over us — But suppose it otherwise, are these Reasons for the Blood, the Rapine, the Mischief, and the Destruction of a Long, Bloody, and Inveterate War.

I cannot help saying, that according to all the Rules we have to judge of War by; the War now beginning, at the Instance, and on the Account of the King of S——n, seems to me wholly Unjustifiable, Injurious, and Unnecessary — I own to say, it seems to me by Way of Caution only; but if it may allow'd me to justify the Positive Part, I shall freely at any Time, undertake to speak it, and defend it; That it is absolutely Unlawful and Unjust.

And first, let any Man tell me, What just Ground of a Rupture, has the Turk with the Muscovite? — Where's the Injury receiv'd? Where the Reparation refus'd, if any Injury has been done? Without ibi, What can be a just Ground of War? — With the Poles, the Turks ate in a strict Treaty of Peace, made and sworn to at Carlowitz, the Emperor, the Venetian, and the Pole, being Confederate. With the Muscovite, a newly renew'd Treaty was compleated and finished for 30 Years, not above a Year ago, even since the King of Sweden was in their Dominions — And all possible Appearances of Peace made on the Turkish part — The Declaration of War now made by the Turks, has no pretence of Inju-

ry, but his Victory over the Swedes, the little pretended Depredations which have been mutual, are Trifles Customary in those Places, and ought to have been redress'd, either by demanding Satisfaction, or by Reprizal, but are no just Ground of a War on either Side.

If then there is any Providence that governs the World, any just Retribution o' Things here — What Succes, can these People hope for? And what can the King of S——n say for himself, on what Foundation he sends Armies of Tartars to Ravage Muscovy and Poland? Is it because he was beaten at Pultowa? — Who sent him thither? What Pretence had he to push at Dethroning the Czar? — As long as Heaven seem'd to call him to the War, so long he bless'd him in it with Success; but when that ended, when the visible Call Ended, the Success Ended.

But what am I talking of — the Justice of War and Peace among Princes? Alas, that any Man should talk such Nonsense! says the Language of the Times — Do not all the Princes of the World Account their Political Interests, Reason and Justice enough for the Invading one another, Ravaging and Desolating Nations, cutting of Throats, and a Thousand Injuries? It is true, they do — But this is what, tho' we see practis'd, we can find no Rule to justify; and what Heaven remarkably takes Vengeance for, on many Occasions, tho' Men when they see the Effect will not own it to the Cause.

I could here very aptly bring some Parallel's, in which Solemn Treaties are as little regarded among Christians as among Turks and Tartars, and where the Political Method of Construing Treaties, as our Interest and Parties guide us, has Harted up into Practice, against the most Sacred stipulations in the World.

I confess, I think, the Turks are Honestier than this; in down-right defying Faith of Treaties, Honour, Principles, and such empty Things — For that is above Board, and if you trust them, you know them: But when Nations Treat, Confederate, UNITE, and make Encirclorations of Interests

In debts upon the Faith of Solemn Stipulations, and the National Honour of their Neighbours, and then while they pretend to keep those Treaties Sacred; yet by taking upon them to strain the Meaning of Things, and determine what is or is not Consistent with such UNION or Treaty, shall Invade the Rights, injure the Properties, or lessen the Privileges of those whom they Unite with, and pretend at the same Time the Treaty is not broken; this I think worse than Turkish, and worse than Barbarian, and such may expect the Protection and Blessing of Heaven accordingly.

I name no Particulars, Persons or Things — But if those People think themselves aggriev'd, who are for Subjecting their Northern Brethren in this Island, to their own Arbitrary Proceedings; Invading their Church Privileges, Dissolving their Establish'd Rights, Subjecting their Church Judicatures to Appeals to the English Bi-

shops; taking away their Right of Patronage and Presentation of Ministers Establish'd by Act of Parliament, and that Act confirm'd by the Union; and all this while saying they do not break their Treaty; I say, if these People that are for these Things think themselves touch'd in it — A small matter will move me to own they are so, and to tell them I will defend it — And in the mean Time I give my Thoughts in these two Heads.

First, That I think such Construsive keeping of Treaties, is worse than a Turkish or Barbarian Rupture.

Secondly, That I believe the Thing itself is so Unjust, that Heaven will Avenge the Attempt, with the Shame and Disappointment of all the Contrivants
A M E N.

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